

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE COUNCIL'S REPORT

1. The ninety-fifth meeting of the Fort George G. Meade Retiree Council was held at 2234 Huber Road, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, at 9:00 a.m. on 5 March 2005. In accordance with AR 600-8-7, this report of the meeting is submitted:

a. The following members were present:

COL Bert L. Rice, USA Ret (Chairman)
SGM Kenneth L. McCall Sr., USA Ret (Co-Chairman)
COL Edward H. Uemura, USA Ret
LTC Jeanette Hammond, USA Ret
LtCDR Sam L. Bridwell, USN Ret (Western MD)
MAJ William Heath, USA Ret
CW2 Ricky Godbolt, USA Ret
SGM J. Paul Funk, USA Ret
SGM James Gilbert, USA Ret
1SG Richard Gilliam, USA Ret
MSG James Lickliter, USA Ret
SFC Carlo DePorto, USA Ret
MSGT Charles E. Plummer, USAF Ret
SSG Walter B. Hollman, Sr., USA Ret

2. The meeting was called to order with a welcome from COL Rice. The invocation was given by SFC DePorto followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance led by COL Rice.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:

a. COL Rice reviewed the minutes of 11 December 2004 meeting which was accepted by the council. He also introduced the following guests:

- (1) Ms. Betty O'Brien, General Manager, AAFES, who spoke on the following:
 - Thanked all for their support of the AAFES facilities and solicited input as to how they can improve services.
 - The car wash that is to be constructed at Fort Meade, which will have six (6) bays and will be located near the current shoppette.
 - The inclusion of a Popeye's restaurant at the shoppette.
 - The renovations to the PX food court that will include the addition of other eateries.
 - The approval for wear by military retirees of the Army Physical Fitness uniform and the improved pt uniform that are available for purchase at the clothing sales store. Additionally, some base

exchanges (Air Force) are now selling the battle dress uniform to military retirees. Ms O'Brien also conducted a question and answer session:

- SGM Gilbert was concerned about the lack of heat in the Post Theater. (Johnson Control's has addressed and corrected the problems. Apologies were offered for the inconvenience that may have been suffered.)
 - MSGT Plummer addressed the reason for closing the cashiers cage and whether or not it will be permanent. (A relocation of resources to improve service necessitated this permanent change. Money orders can be purchased at Customer Services and checks can be cashed at any checkout register.)
- (2) Mr. Paul Rhodes, manager, Fort Meade commissary, addressed the following:
- That he is extremely pleased with the support given to the commissary by the military retired community and looks forward to providing the top notch service that we warrant.
 - The proposed renovations that is planned for the commissary.
 - That he is never completely happy with the store and is constantly striving to improve its operation.
 - The need to receive more input from the retired community, both the good and the not so good.
- Mr. Rhodes conducted a question and answer session:
- 1SG Gilliam asked about the next case lot sale. (April/May 2005) 1SG Gilliam also mentioned that the "self-checkout lanes" are proving to be successful.
 - MSGT Plummer raised a question relative to the employment of the "stockers". (There are paid employees and there are those that are contracted by the vendor. Some of the vendor employees have created problems and action is being taken to correct same.)
 - COL Uemura asked whether or not an analysis could be conducted on a routine basis to determine stocking needs and product demand. (This is routinely performed and the problems lie with the vendors not staying on top of the situation. These concerns are also being addressed.)
 - SGM McCall spoke of baggers using the restroom, not washing their hands and returning to the cash registers to handle and bag customers purchases.

(Signs are posted in the restrooms and personnel are constantly reminded of the need to be more sanitary. If customers notice this problem, they should bring it to the immediate attention of management.)

Mr. Rhodes conducted a trivia game relative to the history of the commissary and awarded gift certificates to the winners. A gift certificate was also donated for awarding at the 11 June 2005 Surviving Spouse Benefit Symposium, to a military ID Card holder.

- (3) COL John F. Sackett, Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) Division Chief, Army Human Resources Command, who conducted a presentation on CRSC and provided handouts:
- CRSC program was enacted in December 2003, as one of DOD's initiatives supporting the global war on terrorism.
 - Provides retroactive compensation for retirees of all services that suffer from combat-related disabilities (received in combat or combat type training).
 - Distinguishes those retirees with combat-related disabilities from those with general service-related disabilities.
 - 700,000 are estimated to be eligible across all services. To date, approximately 28% of the 232,000 eligible Army retirees have applied for CRSC.
 - This is tax-free money available for eligible service members, which may not be affected by the combat-related disability pay awarded by VA.
 - Must have a VA disability rating of 10% or higher that is combat linked.
 - Must have served 20+ years active duty or a reservist age 60+ with 20+ eligible years of service; in a retired status; entitled to retired pay offset by VA payments and have a 10% VA disability rating.
 - Points of contact for more information:
www.crsc.army.mil e-mail crsc.info@us.army.mil
Call toll free:
Army: 1-866-281-3254
Navy/Marines: 1-877-366-2772
Air Force: 1-866-307-1336
Coast Guard: 1-866-307-1336

- All who think that they may be eligible for CRSC, are encouraged to apply. NOTE: COL Sackett will be participating in our Retiree Appreciation Day program on 17 September 2005.
4. RSO REMARKS: Mr. Ashley reported on the following:
- a. He has a CD relative to the CRSC program.
 - b. Extract from AR 670-1, Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia, that addresses the wear of the:
 - Army uniform by retired personnel to include the positioning of the shoulder sleeve insignia for retirees (US Army Retired Patch).
 - Physical fitness uniform or the improved physical fitness uniform by retirees (both available for purchase at the Clothing Sales Store).
 - c. The ID Card section will be closed for training in the morning of the first Thursday of each month. Also, the ID Card office is relocating within the building.
 - d. Retiree Appreciation Day, 16 and 17 September 2005:
 - Letters are being sent in April 2005, inviting organizations to participate.
 - AAFES is conducting their Retiree Appreciation activities during the same period.
 - In lieu of a "guest speaker" on 17 September, a panel will be formed to address questions from the audience.
 - e. Newsletter distribution was again impacted by mailing problems and will be delayed.
 - f. The Courses at Fort Meade (golf course) will be the site of the Surviving Spouse Benefit Symposium on 11 June 2005 and information relative to same is contained in the newsletter.
5. OLD BUSINESS: COL Rice addressed the following:
- a. The response from the Chief of Retired Services, DA, relative to the issue forwarded to the Army Chief of Staff Council, that pertained to the support of soldiers (and their families) wounded or injured as a result of the war on terrorism. "The issue is addressed through the DS3 program, Disabled Soldier Support System, that has been in effect since April 30, 2004." We were thanked for our submittal.
 - b. At our next meeting, the council will finalize the plans for the 11 June symposium.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. COL Rice commented on a copy of a letter from Senator Barbara A. Mikulski, sent to the Commander-in-Chief, signed by 33 Senators, "urging that he give the appropriate attention and priority to the needs of the nations veteran in the fiscal year 2005 budget proposal that was being sent through congress." It also stated that in view of the on-going conflicts abroad, the nation must remain committed to the care of our men and women upon their return and separation from military service. This requires the Department of Veterans Affairs being properly funded to address their care and needs without reliance on increasing out-of-pocket fees to veterans. It was asked that the budget be a clear message to the heroes of our conflicts - past and present - that their sacrifices are not forgotten, and that his support would go a long way in keeping the promises that have been made to our nations veterans.
- b. COL Rice suggested that our next meeting be a breakfast meeting with COL and Mrs. Ives in attendance, so as to bid them farewell. Possible location could be The Courses at Fort Meade. All agreed.

7. APG UPDATE: No representatives in attendance.

8. WESTERN MARYLAND UPDATE: LtCDR Bridwell reported on the following:

- a. Carlisle Barracks is concerned over funding cutbacks and its impact on quality of life issues. (All installations have been affected by the redirection of funds to support global operations.)
- b. BRAC worries prevail at the installation. (COL Rice stated that the BRAC report is scheduled to be made public in May 2005 and the impact may not be as bad as anticipated.)

9. KIMBROUGH ADVISORY COUNCIL: COL Uemura reported that he missed the January 2005 meeting because he had not been made aware of same and is not aware of what transpired. He is to find out why he had not been notified of the meeting. LTC Hammond, who works at Kimbrough, will assist in obtaining a copy of the minutes and of the schedule for future meetings. The Council is reported to have been renamed The Health Care Consortium. NOTE: A number of the Retiree Council members expressed their concerns relative to the long wait they experience at the pharmacy while waiting to have their prescriptions filled and noted that some family members obtain a

ticket for active duty and then have their spouse come by to pickup the prescription thereby circumventing the system.

10. ARMY FAMILY ADVISORY BOARD: No representative in attendance.

11. FORT MEADE COMMISSARY COUNCIL: SGM Funk had nothing else to add to Mr. Rhodes report.

12. CO-CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS: SGM McCall remarked on the following:

- a. The criteria for award of the Korean Service Defense Medal authorized by Public Law 107-114 (2003). Military personnel having served in the Korean theater after 27 July 1954, could be eligible to receive it. The period of eligibility began on 28 July 1954 and is currently open-ended. There are qualifying parameters that must be met.
- b. The Reasonable Charges for Medical Care or Service 2003 Methodology changes made by the Department of Veteran Affairs in their 15 December 2004 notice that affects the charges for medical care or services provided or furnished by VA to a veteran for a non-service connected disability. If the recipient is covered under a health plan contract, or is receiving reimbursement or indemnification under a worker's compensation law, or if reparation insurance is received as the result of an automobile accident, then the charges will apply.
- c. Provided copies of newspaper articles that addressed:
 - Military health care proves an ordeal for Marine.
 - Widows of war speaking out on the lack of benefit information that they are entitled to and Casualty Assistance. Veteran organizations need to get involved and help those that are in need.
 - A State of Maryland bill, House Bill 3, designed to help veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with scholarships and other outreach programs.
- d. Provided information relative to his meeting of the Maryland Veterans Commission of which he is a Commissioner, that included:
 - Secretary of the Maryland State Department of Veterans Affairs, George Owings and his reading of the Governor's proclamation announcing that year 2005 is the Year of the Veteran, the various programs that are being planned, and the support

that is being rendered to all of the Veteran related initiatives.

- Grant money received to improve the states Veterans Cemeteries and the expansion needed at some.
 - Denise Nooe, aide to Senator Mikulski, and her presentation of a handout that pertained to Standing Up for Promise of America that included a listing of a number of federal bills relative to same.
 - His making a presentation at a press conference called by Maryland Governor Ehrlich on 7 February 2005, in Annapolis, in support of House Bill 245 and Senate Bill 211, both pertaining to the tax exemption of military retired pay in an effort to make Maryland a " retiree friendly state", attracting more military retirees to come to or remain in Maryland thereby improving the states economic base.
- e. Announced the Council's meeting schedule for the remainder of 2005:
Saturday - June 4
Saturday - 27 August
Saturday - 3 December
NOTE: Circumstances/events may require the schedule to be modified.

13. GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION:

- a. Mr. Ashley reported that:
 - The Massing of the Colors ceremony will take place at 2:30 p.m., 17 April 2005.
 - The Twilight Tattoo ceremony is scheduled for 19 May 2005.
 - Newsletter articles are due by 1 May 2005.
- b. CW2 Godbolt announced that he could setup a web page for the Council and was given approval to proceed.
- c. COL Uemura remarked that there was a noted absence of the Installation Commanders staff at today's meeting.

14. SGM McCall extended a "thank you" to the Council members for their continued support and dedication.

15. The meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m. with a reminder that the next meeting of the council is scheduled for Saturday, 8 a.m., 4 June 2005, at The Courses at Fort Meade (farewell breakfast for the Ives).

BERT L. RICE
COL, USA Ret
Chairman, Fort Meade
Retiree Council

KENNETH L. MCCALL, SR.
SGM, USA Ret
Co-Chairman, Fort Meade
Retiree Council